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Final report on the impact of the activities carried out by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization during the International Year of Languages (2008)

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General hereby transmits the final report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on the impact of the activities carried out by UNESCO during the International Year of Languages (2008), in accordance with General Assembly resolution 61/266.

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Final report on the impact of the activities carried out by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization during the International Year of Languages (2008)

Report of the Director-General

Summary

The present report, prepared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 61/266, entitled "Multilingualism". In paragraph 25 of the resolution, the Assembly proclaimed 2008 the International Year of Languages and invited UNESCO "to serve as the lead agency for the Year". In subparagraph 25 (b) of the resolution, the Assembly requested the Director-General of UNESCO to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session on the impact of the activities carried out during the Year.

Following the conclusion of the International Year of Languages on 21 February 2009, the present report provides comprehensive information on the activities developed for the Year and completes the information provided by UNESCO in its interim report (see A/63/349).

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 61/266 on multilingualism, in which the Assembly proclaimed 2008 the International Year of Languages and invited the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to serve as the lead agency for the Year. In the resolution, the Assembly also invited the Director-General of UNESCO to report to the Assembly at its sixty-third session on the impact of the activities carried out during the Year, and invited Member States, the United Nations system and all other relevant stakeholders to develop, support and intensify activities aimed at fostering respect for and the promotion and protection of all languages, in particular endangered languages, linguistic diversity and multilingualism.

2. The International Year of Languages was officially launched by the Director-General of UNESCO at UNESCO headquarters on 21 February 2008, International Mother Language Day, and was officially closed on 21 February 2009. The present report provides comprehensive information on the activities developed for the Year and completes the information provided by UNESCO in its interim report (see A/63/349). The present report is factual in character and covers many but not all of the activities undertaken during the Year, based on information made available between 21 February 2008 and 21 February 2009.

3. With regard to qualitative assessment of the sustainable effects of the Year, notably on implementation of national language policies and their impact in 2009, 2010 and 2011, the new, third edition of the UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger of Disappearing will serve as an important monitoring tool, it being understood that other monitoring instruments could be developed, notably in the framework of the 2010-2011 UNESCO programme and budget.

II. Objectives, functions and content

4. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 61/266, UNESCO developed, in its role as lead agency for the celebrations of the International Year of Languages, an intersectoral strategy defining the objectives, functions, content and means of its action during the Year.

5. Concerning the objectives, UNESCO adhered to the goal of the International Year of Languages as stated in paragraph 25 (a) of General Assembly resolution 61/266 and focused on facilitating the development of "activities aimed at fostering respect for the promotion and protection of all languages, in particular endangered languages, linguistic diversity and multilingualism".

6. As regards the functions, the strategy focused on advocacy, facilitation and monitoring through the mobilization of networks, it being understood that the implementation of effective policy on languages should be the responsibility of Governments. UNESCO's main partners in this initiative were identified among the

National Commissions for UNESCO, as well as in the most important international, regional or specialized linguistic institutions.[1]

7. As regards the content of action by UNESCO, the fundamental message is to convey the idea that languages are not only essential to the identity of groups and individuals and to their peaceful coexistence, but that they also constitute a strategic factor in making progress towards sustainable development and in achieving the six goals contained in the framework for action on "Education for all: meeting our collective commitments", adopted at the World Education Forum in Dakar in April 2000, and the Millennium Development Goals. UNESCO embodied this message in the slogan: "Languages matter", which was translated into over 200 languages and disseminated through the UNESCO website

8. To provide recommended lines of action to its partners, UNESCO identified different possible thematic clusters, including: (a) flagship awareness-raising initiatives; (b) languages and education; (c) endangered languages; (d) languages, cultural exchange and translation; (e) languages and cyberspace; (f) languages, socialization and integration; and (g) languages, knowledge and know-how.

9. All projects were classified under different headings, according to their main objectives, namely: (a) capacity-building; (b) awareness-raising; (c) think-tanks and research; and (d) project catalysts and multi-stakeholder channelling, together with main outreach levels (internal, local, national, regional and global).

10. With a view to communicating its action in this area to a wide public, UNESCO created a number of tools to be used according to a defined calendar and programme cycle, including different phases for awareness-raising, implementation, data-collection and reporting.

11. The tools included a specially created website for the International Year of Languages providing general information, reference documents, useful contacts, a downloadable guidance brochure, an adaptable poster and a communication toolkit in six languages.[2] To provide current reporting on ongoing implementation, the website also features a daily updated list of projects.

12. Circular letters were sent to UNESCO National Commissions and principal United Nations, governmental and non-governmental partners in November 2007 and September 2008, and the Director-General made an official call for participation and mobilization in October 2007 (in over 30 languages) and in February 2008. At the same time, all of UNESCO's sectors and field offices were mobilized to orient and reinforce their workplans to serve the objectives of the Year.

13. As a result of its mobilization, UNESCO was notified of over 200 activities in different domains and of varying scope implemented during the Year. Further information on implementation of activities for the Year is expected to continue to arrive until April 2009.

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[1] Including United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Associated Schools Project Network, UNESCO University Chairs, African Academy of Languages, Comunidade dos Paises de Língua Portuguesa, Council of Europe, Organisation internationale de la francophonie, Latin Union, Linguamón: Casa de les Llengües, Foundation for Endangered Languages, Linguapax and Summer Institute of Linguistics.

[2] In addition to the versions of the toolkit in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish, a version in Portuguese was also published by the National Commission for UNESCO in Portugal.

III. Flagship awareness-raising initiatives

14. The Year provided a unique opportunity for successful awareness-raising initiatives. To draw the attention of decision makers, opinion makers and larger segments of the general public to the strategic relevance of languages for development, a number of international seminars and conferences, mainly organized by UNESCO or with the support or sponsorship of UNESCO, took place throughout the Year, as follows:

(a) 21 February 2008, UNESCO, Paris. Official launch of the International Year of Languages with an information workshop on standard-setting instruments promoting multilingualism;

(b) 5-7 March, Johannesburg, South Africa, and April 22-24, Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania. Conferences of the African Academy of Languages on the role of transborder languages and of lesser-used languages in Africa;

(c) 9 June, Paris. Launch of the Chirac Foundation and its programme for the protection of endangered languages;

(d) 13-15 June, Eisenstadt, Austria. International Conference on Everyday Multilingualism;

(e) 1-3 July, Bangkok. Second International Conference on Language Development, Language Revitalization and Multilingual Education in Ethnolinguistic Communities;

(f) 2-4 July, Yakutsk, Russian Federation. International Conference on Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace;

(g) 27-28 August, Tokyo. United Nations University and UNESCO Conference on Globalization and Languages: Building on our Rich Heritage;

(h) 7 October, Paris. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Executive Board, thematic debate on "Protecting indigenous and endangered languages and the role of languages in promoting education for all in the context of sustainable development";

(i) 9-10 October, Bilbao, Spain. International Conference on Challenges of Minority Languages in the Age of Globalization;

(j) 4 November, Lleida, Spain. United Nations Association of Spain, seminar on the International Year of Languages;

(k) 5-7 November, Nairobi. Sixth International Conference on Adult Education, Preparatory Conference in Africa on the power of youth and adult learning for Africa's development;

(l) 27-28 November, Helsinki. International Conference on Minority Languages;

(m) 17-18 December, United Nations Headquarters, New York. UNESCO and the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, global seminar on "Linguistic diversity, globalization and development";

(n) 19-21 January 2009, Bamako. Bamako International Forum on Multilingualism;

(o) 18 February 2009, Paris. Round table organized at UNESCO by the Non-Aligned Movement on "Indigenous languages: world views, globalization, development and peace";

(p) 21 February 2009, UNESCO, Paris. Closing of the International Year of Languages, implementation report and round table on "Languages matter for communities: the way forward".

IV. Languages and education

15. Two major fields of UNESCO's action — multilingualism and the use of the mother language in the education system — were at the heart of the majority of the initiatives implemented in the framework of the International Year of Languages. A summary of many of the activities reported by the time of preparation of the present report follows.

Activities of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations[3]

16. The International Conference on Multilingual Education: Challenges, Perspectives, Opportunities, held in New Delhi from 5 to 8 February 2008, brought together some of the best known international experts in theory and practice of multilingual education to share views and interact with experts and practitioners from India and other South Asian countries. Representatives from the Jawaharlal Nahru University, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Save the Children Fund, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (Ministry of Human Resources Development of India), the Central Institute of Indian Languages, the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) and UNESCO participated in this constructive dialogue.

17. On 11 July 2008, the International Conference on Preservation of Mother Languages in Diaspora Communities: the Impact of Legislature was organized in New York by the Armenian General Benevolent Union. The Conference focused on the preservation of mother languages in diaspora communities. It brought together more than 300 participants, including representatives of States Members of the United Nations, United Nations officials, scholars, representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community leaders and youth between the ages of 14 and 24, who examined the national and international legal impact of the preservation of mother languages, using the Armenian and Lebanese diasporas as examples.

18. A project on "Promoting inclusive education through policy support for multilingual education", implemented in Thailand from September 2006 to July 2008, aimed to help Member States make their education systems more inclusive and improve educational quality by promoting mother-tongue-based multilingual education. It involved awareness-raising, capacity-building, institutional development and increasing responsibilities for national institutions. Organized by multiple partners such as the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization, UNICEF, SIL International relevant departments within ministries of education,

[3] Multi-stakeholder projects coordinated by UNESCO or developed at the initiative of UNESCO programme sectors and, in some cases, by other United Nations organizations.

universities and NGOs, this initiative was designed to encourage multilingual education in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nepal, Pakistan and Thailand.

19. The translation and publication of the UNESCO "Advocacy kit for promoting multilingual education: including the excluded" took place from 1 November 2007 to 30 June 2008, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of Cambodia, to strengthen capacity-building in multilingualism within Cambodia.

20. The second phase of the Ten Year Plan for the Development of Basic Education was initiated in Burkina Faso in January 2008, involving different awareness-raising activities of the Ministry of Basic Education and Literacy of Burkina Faso, in collaboration with Fund for Literacy and Non-formal Education, UNICEF, the Swiss Cooperation Office and the Canadian International Development Agency. Activities include transcription workshops in various languages such as Manding, Fulfuldé, Djerma-Songhai, Lingala and Wolof. These workshops, which will continue until 2010, will bring together participants from the different linguistic regions of the world. The implementation of a literacy policy is expected to promote literate environments.

21. Seizing the opportunity provided by International Mother Language Day and the International Year of Languages, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of Cambodia and the Education Unit of the UNESCO office in Phnom Penh jointly organized, for the first time in Cambodia, a half-day event to celebrate linguistic and cultural diversity, as well as to advocate mother-tongue-based bilingual and multilingual education. The main purpose of this celebration of International Mother Language Day and the International Year of Languages in Cambodia, held in Phnom Penh from 19 March to 19 June, was to promote multilingualism and linguistic and cultural diversity.

22. In order to raise awareness of multilingual education, the UNESCO office in Beijing, together with national counterparts such as the China Education Association for International Exchange, the National Commission for UNESCO of China and the Beijing Language and Culture University, organized a one-day seminar to celebrate International Mother Language Day and the International Year of Languages on 11 April 2008 in Beijing. The theme of the celebration was "Promoting cultural diversity and preparing for the Olympic Games". The event brought together 92 participants from embassies, international organizations, universities, research institutes and NGOs.

23. In Phnom Penh on 18 June 2008, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, in collaboration with the UNESCO Office in Phnom Penh, organized a national workshop on multilingual education in non-formal education, as a follow-up to the review of the Education Strategic Plan and Education Sector Support Programmes conducted during the Mid-Term Review Forum held in March 2008. The objective of the workshop was to raise awareness about the roles of multilingual and bilingual education. Approximately 70 participants attended the workshop.

24. The UNESCO office in Dhaka, supported by the National Commission for UNESCO of Bangladesh, organized activities to stimulate awareness about the importance of literacy with a focus on the adult literacy situation in Bangladesh and to promote indigenous languages. Among the activities organized by the National Commission were a children's rally, a cultural show and a three-day exhibition of

UNESCO books and publications. The Dhaka office also published a book in September 2008 in collaboration with a local NGO, Meghdut entitled "First South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation poetry evening: a compilation", to celebrate International Mother Language Day.

25. The UNESCO office in Hanoi, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Training of Viet Nam, the Research Centre for Ethnic Minority Education and the Ethnic Minorities Working Group, organized an awareness-raising event in Hanoi on "Advocacy and capacity-building for a mother-tongue-based instruction approach" from June to December 2008. The Government of Viet Nam has long been supportive of the use of ethnic minority languages through its policies. However, on a practical level, this is often limited to the teaching of ethnic minority languages as a subject rather than as a medium of instruction. This event aimed to increase awareness among a broad range of stakeholders on the merits of mother-tongue-based instruction.

26. The UNESCO office in Hanoi is also managing a project entitled "Literacy programme for Bahnar ethnic minorities utilizing a bilingual and mother-tongue approach" from July 2008 to December 2009. Carried out in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Training of Viet Nam, the Research Centre for Ethnic Minority Education and the Department of Education and Training of Gia Lai Province, this project is part of a regional programme funded by Japan through funds in trust. It aims at developing a quality mother-tongue and bilingual literacy programme for Bahnar ethnic minority adults.

Activities by Member States[4]

27. From 7 to 9 November 2008, the University of Cyprus and the Ministry of Education and Culture (under the authority of the National Commission for UNESCO of Cyprus) organized in Nicosia a three-day event on "Languages for intercultural dialogue", devoted to the teaching and learning of foreign languages at all levels of education. The event opened a dialogue among all stakeholders on the current situation and the challenges of and prospects for language teaching in Cyprus. The conference offered participants a wide variety of both practical and theoretical presentations through academic lectures by teachers and workshops.

28. The National Commission for UNESCO of Lebanon, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, organized a seminar on 21 February 2008 in Beirut on "Our mother tongue: approaches to practices and functions". This awareness-raising activity focused on the use of the mother tongue in academic sectors, daily life and political and religious speeches.

29. Since May 2008, the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture and the National Commission for UNESCO of Austria have organized workshops on multilingualism in Austrian schools. The workshops were intended for school directors, parents and teachers who were not involved in language education (grammar and secondary school level). Their aim was to support school communities in the field of language education and they were designed to make people aware of the importance and value of linguistic diversity and its effective implementation in schools. The content of the workshops was based on experience and best practices.

[4] Initiatives coordinated mainly by National Commissions for UNESCO.

30. From April 2008 to October 2009, the UNESCO National Commission of Swaziland, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, is undertaking a general assessment of the vitality or endangerment of siSwati, including examining the way languages are used in education beginning at the basic level (i.e. early childhood care and education). Research and efforts already undertaken in this area have been taken into consideration. After the assessment, a strategy will be developed to undertake advocacy campaigns to change the attitude of parents towards the use of siSwati and English.

Civil society activities[5]

31. From 29 March to 29 July 2008, Ann Mihailova, in partnership with the East Ukraine Volodymyr Dahl National University and the Ukrainian charity organization Soziume, compiled into one document informative texts on culture, economy and education in Spain and Latin America. Entitled "España y America Latina más cerca", it was geared to various academic institutes in Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Panama, Spain, and Ukraine.

32. At the Seventh Conference on Languages and International Business Communication, organized by Sprachen and Beruf in Berlin from 21 to 23 April 2008, experts informed participants through practical workshops, presentations and comprehensive plenary sessions about the benefits of foreign languages and intercultural communication skills for achieving success in business. An accompanying exhibition allowed both providers and users to exchange ideas and find relevant solutions for their individual needs.

33. Organized by the Associação de Professores Expressão e Comunicação Visual, in collaboration with the Escola Superior de Educação of the Instituto Politécnico de Beja, the Centro de Investigação em Educação e Psicologia of the Universidade de Évora and the Universidade de Huelva, the "Congreso Ibero-americano de Educação Artística" invited a group of specialists to reflect on pedagogical and educational issues within artistic contexts. The Congress was held in Portugal from 22 to 24 May 2008 and included participants from Portugal, Spain and Brazil and other countries in South America.

34. A symposium on "Les langues au cœur de la dynamique professionnelle: spécificités aux frontières", organized by the Conseil Général de la Moselle, was held on 21 May 2008 at the communication centre in Moselle, France. In partnership with the Sarre Ministry of Education, the Inspection Académique de la Moselle and the CEB Akademie, participants from the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain were invited to exchange views on intercultural communication in business.

35. The 2008 programme at the International Network for Educational Exchange Summer University in Costa Rica, which focused on sustainable development, was held in San José from 29 June to 26 July 2008. Partner institutions included the Universidad Latinoamericana de Ciencia y Tecnología, AIESEC (formerly the Association international des étudiants en sciences économiques et commerciales), Ecosocial Forum Europe and various Costa Rican Government agencies. This was a comprehensive learning adventure, with business visits, academic courses, business

[5] Multi-stakeholder activities coordinated mainly by civil society organizations, universities and professional associations.

projects and Spanish language training to better communicate within the Latin American environment.

36. Held in Northallerton, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, from 31 August to 1 September 2008 and organized by the North Yorkshire County Council, in collaboration with Belfast Metropolitan College, Escuela Oficial de Idiomas Raimundo de Toledo, Berufliche Fortbildungszentren der Bayerischen Wirtschaft, Centre de formation professionnelle et de promotion agricole, Wicklow Further Education Centre and Drummond Community High School, the activity "Tandem plus learning" was aimed at developing a partnership between learning and e-learning.

V. Endangered languages

37. Many of the initiatives undertaken in the framework of the International Year of Languages focused on the documentation, revitalization and preservation of endangered languages, mainly at the national level.

Activities of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations

38. During 2008, UNESCO prepared the new, online edition of the Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger of Disappearing, a tool to monitor the status of endangered languages and the trends in linguistic diversity at the global level made possible thanks to the support of the Government of Norway. The online Atlas was launched on 21 February 2009.

39. From January 2006 to December 2008, the UNESCO office in Apia oversaw a capacity-building project on "Indigenous language revitalization and preservation in Melanesia and the Pacific, phase II". Undertaken in collaboration with the University of Papua New Guinea, the University of the South Pacific and the Institute of Solomon Island Studies, the project aimed at continuing the survey and documentation of Melanesian languages launched during the first phase of the project (2000-2003). It focused on capacity-building by training local students and field workers to conduct and document linguistic research.

40. The UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean in Kingston is undertaking a project on "Promoting preservation of Caribbean indigenous languages" from October 2006 to December 2009. This initiative seeks to stimulate preservation of indigenous content and dissemination of diverse cultural expressions of indigenous peoples in the Caribbean. It provides training to indigenous groups on techniques to gather and document language and cultural information from their communities and publish them on the Caribbean Indigenous and Endangered Language website of the University of the West Indies.

41. From 24 to 31 May 2008, the Musée des Confluences in France launched a new annual public event "Paroles d'autochtones" designed to give representatives of indigenous groups a voice. Various events in cultural, public and academic spaces were organized in partnership with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Survival International and the Compagnie Théâtre des Asphodèles.

42. Commemorating the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and celebrating the International Year of Languages, the UNESCO Regional Bureau of Education for Latin America and the Caribbean paid homage to Chile's indigenous cultures and languages by publishing the text of the Declaration in Spanish and in the three most important native languages in Chile: Mapudungun, Aymara and Rapa Nui. This will contribute to preserving languages at risk of extinction. At present, only 1,500 people worldwide speak Rapa Nui and this is the first translation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights into that language.

43. In the framework of the International Year of Languages and International Mother Language Day, the UNESCO office in Quito organized a discussion board with leading Ecuadorian and Colombian journalists, writers, poets and specialists in culture and linguistics, who analysed the importance of mother tongues in minority cultures and scientific development. Some 80 people participated in the event, entitled "¡Viva, la lengua viva! Long live the mother tongue!", which took place in the Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana Benjamin Carrión in Quito on 21 February 2008.

44. From 1 April to 30 September 2008, the UNESCO office in Brasilia, in partnership with the Instituto de Investigação e Desenvolvimento em Política Linguística, coordinated a major survey of the current state of linguistic diversity and ongoing related activities in Brazil, emphasizing the links between intangible heritage (including endangered languages) and cultural diversity.

45. From May to December 2008, the UNESCO office in Brasilia, carried out a national awareness-raising campaign in Brazil on the importance of linguistic diversity and oral traditions. This initiative, made possible by the collaboration of Brazil's Museum of the Person, involved the creation of an online platform for multi-language storytelling.

46. In the framework of the International Year of Languages, the UNESCO Regional Office in Dakar helped the Éditions Papyrus Afrique to publish a monthly bilingual Wolof-Pulaar journal and books in national languages. *Lasli/Njëlbéen* is the first newspaper in Senegal printed in national languages. UNESCO sponsored an exhibition celebrating the publication's tenth anniversary, entitled "Lasli/Njëlbéen, 10 ans au service d'une information écrite en langues nationales" and a meeting on the introduction of national languages in the education system of Senegal. These events were held in Dakar from 4 to 6 July 2008.

47. Since 2002, the UNESCO office in Beijing has worked with the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences to record and research endangered minority languages in China. This included documentation of the working conditions and lexicons of eight different minority languages (Ersu, Manchu, She, Tujia, Gelao, Lakkia, Western Yugur and Hezhen), the development of Latinized writing systems for each of them, and the recording of the languages in use. These activities helped to create an audiovisual archive and teaching materials for each endangered language.

48. In 2008, the UNESCO office in Abuja, as part of its effort to protect indigenous languages from extinction, carried out capacity-building workshops to safeguard endangered Nigerian languages and published the workshop proceedings, which highlighted the challenges involved in safeguarding language in Nigeria. UNESCO's culture sector, in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Tourism, Culture and National Orientation, originated the following activities to

commemorate the International Year of Languages: mapping and documentation of indigenous languages in Nigeria; organizing creative writing competitions in indigenous Nigerian languages; networking with UNESCO institutions and capacity-building programmes to develop cultural officers and stakeholders in safeguarding languages; publication of proceedings of workshops on endangered languages; and sponsoring indigenous language programmes in electronic media.

49. A cooperation project financed by funds in trust from Japan on "Writing a Runyankore Rukiga-English dictionary for the preservation of the languages in Uganda" was carried out by a team of linguists from the Institute of Languages of Makerere University in Kampala. It was completed on 25 August 2008.

50. The primary aim of the project on "Revitalization of a disappearing Southern Khoesan language, N|u of the Khomani Community", carried out in Namibia from 2 October 2006 to 28 March 2008 by the Section of Intangible Cultural Heritage within UNESCO's culture sector (in collaboration with the Department of Linguistics of the University of Namibia), was to progressively teach the community's youth the grammar and sound system of this language, which is currently spoken by only eight elderly members of the community.

51. The UNESCO office in Hanoi, in close collaboration with the Association of Vietnamese Folklorists, the Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences and the National University for Social and Human Sciences, coordinated the project "Safeguarding the endangered language of the Khang ethnic minority" from 9 September 2006 to 28 March 2008. The programme aimed at safeguarding the endangered language of the Khang ethnic minority living in Than Thuoc commune, Viet Nam. The Khang language was researched and revitalized to continue serving as a living communication tool in daily community activities.

Activities of Member States

52. On 19 February 2008, in the framework of International Mother Language Day, the Pan South African Language Board, with the support of the National Commission for UNESCO of South Africa, organized a programme in Pretoria focusing on the reinforcement of multilingualism and on the protection of minority endangered languages (especially Khoe, San and Nama in the Northern Cape area of South Africa).

53. On 21 February 2008, the National Commission for UNESCO of Egypt organized a celebration of International Mother Language Day in Cairo. During a seminar on the protection of the endangered mother language, university professors and specialized experts gave lectures on the Arabic language, the challenges of globalization and the ways of protecting cultural diversity.

54. From 21 to 27 July 2008, all New Zealanders celebrated "Maori language week — Te wiki o te reo Maori". This awareness-raising event, which was organized by the Maori Language Commission in collaboration with the New Zealand Human Rights Commission, the Ministry of Education, and the National Commission for UNESCO of New Zealand, aimed at promoting the use of the Maori language in everyday life. The theme was "Te reo i te kainga — Maori language spoken in the home".

55. On 18 November 2008, the National Commission for UNESCO of Cuba, in collaboration with the Sociedad Cubana de Esperanto and the Asociación Cubana de

las Naciones Unidas organized a seminar in Havana on "El Esperanto y la UNESCO", underlining the importance of this language for international communication and the implication for UNESCO regarding its protection and promotion. Over 200 persons participated in the seminar.

Civil society activities

56. Mainly targeting the people of West Sahara, France, Morocco and Spain, a survey on the legacy of colonial language politics in the actual linguistic situation of the Western Sahara, published on 27 May 2008 by the University of Bremen in Germany in partnership with the École des hautes études en sciences sociales of France, aimed at studying the historical and actual consequences of the colonial language politics of France and Spain for the West Saharan and nomadic populations and the subsequent expansion or deterioration of Spanish and French influence in the region.

57. From 24 to 27 September 2008, the Foundation for Endangered Languages, in collaboration with the Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning and the Fryske Akademy, held its twelfth conference on "Endangered languages and language learning" in the Netherlands.

58. Held at the Management Centre of the Bangor University Business School in the United Kingdom on 22 and 23 August 2008, the multidisciplinary conference "Global understanding in multilingual, multimodal and multimedia contexts" marked the International Year of Languages. This conference, organized by the World Language Documentation Centre, was aimed at bridging the communication gap between academia and industry.

59. Organized from 7 January to 7 October 2008 by the Rhônes-Alpes Region of France, in collaboration with multiple partners Interactions, Corpus, Apprentissages, Représentations, Institut Pierre Gardette, Centre de dialectologie de l'Université Grenoble 3, Dynamique du language, Centre de recherches et d'études anthropologiques and Institut national de recherche pédagogique, a survey on "Pratiques linguistiques en Rhône-Alpes (occitan, franco-provençal) et politiques linguistiques", outlined the sociolinguistic practices in indigenous languages in the region.

VI. Languages, cultural exchange and translation

60. The projects listed in this chapter focus on the role of languages in forging cultural identities and promoting regional integration and intercultural dialogue.

Activities of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations

61. The World Congress of the International Federation of Translators, a leading event in the global translation community, is held every three years. In 2008, it took place in Asia for the first time (Shanghai, 4-7 August). Made possible by the participation of the Translators Association of China, SIL International and UNESCO, the Congress offered a rich programme and presented to participants the best of Chinese culture and civilization.

62. Sponsored by UNESCO, the World Congress on Specialized Translation: Languages and Intercultural Dialogue in a Globalizing World, was held in Havana from 8 to 13 December 2008 by the Unión Latina and Maaya (the World Network for Linguistic Diversity). The forum explored current international policies that further the work of translation and of translators, a key factor in the preservation of linguistic diversity. In addition to the plenary sessions, specific workshops were organized on related themes and a technological showcase presented the main advances in translation tools.

63. From January 2007 to December 2009, the Section of Museums and Cultural Objects within UNESCO's culture sector is promoting the publication of cultural heritage guides in local languages to promote the active participation of all those involved in museum management. This initiative is also aimed at ensuring long-term conservation and preservation of cultural objects.

64. From 1 January 2008 to 30 December 2009, the project "Appui à la production et à la diffusion d'outils favorisant la diversité culturelle et le dialogue intercultural", launched by the UNESCO office in Rabat, aims to promote linguistic diversity. In collaboration with the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IESCO) and the National Commissions for UNESCO of the Maghreb region, the project's main objective is to undertake studies on cultural diversity and on intercultural dialogue to create teaching tools for awareness-raising in French and Arabic.

65. From 15 November 2007 to 30 March 2008, using the database "Treasury of the Azerbaijani language" and coordinated by the Azerbaijan University of Languages in collaboration with the Writers' Union of Azerbaijan, the National Centre for Translation and the UNESCO Clearing House for Literary Translation (Index Translationum), an inventory of literary works translated into Azerbaijani was carried out, with a special focus on youth literature. A database of Azerbaijani writings and translations has also been created.

66. Organized by the Permanent Representatives of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Tajikistan to the United Nations and co-sponsored by UNESCO, a commemoration ceremony on the occasion of the 1,150th anniversary of the birth of Abu Abdullah Jafar ibn Mohammad Rudaki was held on 26 June 2008 at United Nations Headquarters in New York. This distinguished poet is considered to have laid the foundations for Persian classical literature.

Activities of Member States

67. A seminar on "Cultural and language pluralism in the Republic of Bashkortostan", held on 26 March 2008 at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, was a key feature of the "Bashkortostan days in UNESCO" programme. Participants examined the success story of language policies in the Bashkiria region and attempted to find ways to preserve cultural diversity, maintain multilingualism, save endangered languages and build peace. The event was made possible by joint efforts of the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Bashkortostan, the National Commission for UNESCO of the Russian Federation and the Permanent Delegation of the Russian Federation to UNESCO.

68. In January 2008, the Ministry of Culture and Heritage Preservation of Tunisia, in collaboration with the National Commission for UNESCO of Tunisia, launched the National Year of Translation.

69. To launch the International Year of Languages in Cuba, a seminar was organized on 21 February 2008 at the Centro de Estudios Martianos in Havana by the National Commission for UNESCO of Cuba in collaboration with the Asociación Cubana de las Naciones Unidas and the Centro de Estudios Martianos. The seminar, entitled "Celebración del Día de la Lengua dedicada al Año Internacional de los Idiomas" underlined the importance of national language and the protection of language through educational activities and intercultural dialogue.

70. A workshop on "2008 International Year of Languages: human rights and linguistic rights" was organized on 25 November 2008 by the Italian Esperanto Foundation and the municipality of Florence, under the auspices of the National Commission for UNESCO of Italy.

71. The National Commission for UNESCO of Italy organized in May 2008 a three-day meeting in Cosenza, in collaboration with the local authorities, on the issue of the legal instruments for the protection of minority languages in the political, academic and media sectors.

Civil society activities

72. A symposium on "Why 'International Year of Languages'? Language diversity and culture of dialogue" took place on 12 October 2008 in Tokyo to raise awareness on intercultural dialogue and translation. It was organized by the Japanese Esperanto Institute, in collaboration with the Wakayama International Exchange Association and the Intercultural Research Center of Kobe University.

73. Participating in various public events from 2 February to 23 June 2008 under the theme "Les intellectuels et artistes pour le plurilinguisme et la diversité culturelle", intellectuals and artists from European and non-European countries met to discuss linguistic pluralism and cultural diversity and to promote a common raising of consciousness. These meetings were organized at UNESCO headquarters in Paris by the Observatoire européen du plurilinguisme, in collaboration with the Permanent Delegation of Romania to UNESCO.

74. A conference on "Regional development in the Alps-Adriatic area in a global perspective" was part of Austrian and international activities to mark the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue and the International Year of Languages. Organized by the Alpen-Adria University of Klagenfurt and the National Commission for UNESCO of Austria from 8 to 10 October 2008 in Vienna, the conference adopted a geographic approach and promoted a sustainable organizational structure.

75. By inviting poets of various origins to read poems in their native language on 6 and 7 February 2008 in Montréal, Canada, Élizabeth Robert, in collaboration with the League of Canadian Poets, the Canada Council for the Arts and the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, created, "Noches de poesía: Montréal", a network and platform of new friendships and understanding of cultural differences.

76. From 1 March to 31 October 2008, the Festival de théâtre Vénézuélien à Paris, organized by the Association le ciel d'émail, enabled the French public to discover a

foreign language through plays performed in their original language: Spanish from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

77. A research project entitled "Multicultural road movie", led by the Brazilian professor Hernani Heffner, was published with the collaboration of the Casaquattro Comunicação and the Ministry of Culture of Brazil in English, Portuguese and Spanish and was distributed to public libraries in Argentina, Brazil, Spain, United Arab Emirates and United Kingdom from 3 March to 30 May 2008.

78. On 13 and 14 June 2008, an international conference on "Translation and intercultural dialogue", organized in Évora, Portugal, by the University of Évora, the University of Malaga and the University of Cordoba, presented recent research and analysis on translation, multilingualism and multicultural dialogue.

79. The Bengali community in Italy published on 24 February 2008 a document entitled "Special souvenir on International Mother Language Day". The main features of the document were published in both Bengali and Italian for a better understanding of the various immigrant communities residing in Italy.

80. The French chapter of the Society for Technical Communication hosted a conference on "Communicating Europe" on 14 March 2008 in Paris. In collaboration with business companies Docware, Acrolinx, Ovidius and AuthorIT, a varied programme was organized with international experts.

81. In November 2007, the Indo-Bangla Cultural Initiative, in collaboration with the Independent University of Bangladesh, organized an "India-Bangladesh festival of books and writers" in Dhaka with the support of the High Commission of India. An Indo-Bangla translation project was also initiated with the aim of translating Bangladeshi writings into English and regional writings from India into Bangla. The project "Anubad: a translation project" ended on 30 April 2008.

VII. Languages and cyberspace

82. The projects developed on this theme relate to the promotion of multilingualism and universal access to information in cyberspace, in the framework of efforts to build inclusive knowledge societies.

Activities of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations

83. In June 2008, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers announced in Paris the implementation of new internationalized domain names for Internet addresses. This has enabled millions of users to access the Internet using their own, non-Latin scripts, and is a step towards achieving multilingualism in cyberspace. Using the UNESCO network, and in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the League of Arab States and the company Affilias, the technical work allowing non-Latin script into the domain name system was undertaken in order to harmonize the Arabic, Farsi and Urdu languages using the same Arabic script.

84. From July 2008 to February 2009, an update was undertaken of the study *Measuring Linguistic Diversity on the Internet* published by UNESCO. In collaboration with the Union Latina and the organization Funredes, the result of the

update was published under the title "Twelve years of experiences in measuring linguistic diversity on the Internet: balance and perspectives". The study focuses on different methodologies used over the past 12 years to create indicators and measure linguistic diversity on the Internet, findings and analysis of the past and current Web language surveys, as well as advantages and limitations of the existing measurement methodologies and future perspectives.

85. The project "Open training platform", an initiative of UNESCO, is an online collaborative hub for free learning resources in all development domains, especially language, to better serve local needs to acquire knowledge and skills on a worldwide basis through a collaborative effort providing hyperlinks to 2,300 resources. It is enriched by over 1,600 members from all United Nations organizations and over 630 other institutions. The free learning resources are available in the domains of conversational languages courses, language teaching, language acquisition, preparation for language examinations and linguistics. The hub will be available until 2014.

86. The UNESCO office in Rabat, in cooperation with the Information and Communication Technology for Development in the Arab Region of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), began creating in June 2006 the Miftaah memory stick, containing not only free and open-source software, but also storage capacity for the user's personal data. Until June 2009, the Miftaah memory stick will also provide a customized and user-friendly interface, ensuring accessibility to this free and open-source software package in Arabic, English and French. This resource was made possible by the participation of the Centre de recherche sur l'information scientifique et technique in Algiers, the Mohammadia School of Engineers in Rabat and Birzeit University in Palestine.

87. Especially devoted to the Maghreb heritage, the CD-ROM "Tome II Majaliss", made available on 21 June 2008, enables Maghreb countries easier access to public information through Information and Communication Technologies. Made possible by the UNESCO office in Rabat and ISESCO, and with the collaboration of the Ministry of Education of Morocco, the CD-ROM is aimed at preserving the Arabic literacy heritage and contains more than 50 literary works with special soundtracks for the visually impaired.

Activities of Member States

88. In September 2008, the UNESCO Information for All Programme in the Russian Federation finalized a survey in over half of the regions of the country on the implementation of multilingualism in cyberspace policy. The results have been published and discussed in the framework of various round tables and conferences.

89. A cultural evening, "Sprache bauen welt — Language builds the world", launched the International Year of Languages in Austria, at the Radio Culture House of the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation on the occasion of International Mother Language Day on 21 February 2008. The National Commission for UNESCO in Austria and the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture invited journalists, the local UNESCO network, policymakers and other individuals to attend. Authors of foreign origin read excerpts of their work and discussed with students, educators and scientists their experience with multilingualism.

Civil society activities

90. Organized by the North-Ossetian State Pedagogical Institute, the second Scientific International Conference on Multilingual Education as the Basis for Preservation of Language Heritage and Cultural Diversity of Humanity" was held on 12 and 13 May 2008 in Vladikavkaz, Russian Federation. The main goal of the conference was to acquaint scientists and cultural activists with UNESCO programmes and projects in the field of language and cultural legacy preservation.

91. Fully aware that information could become more accessible if available in the local language, the Kerala State information technology mission, under the leadership of the Government of Kerala, India, and with the collaboration of the Society for Promotion of Alternate Computing and Employment launched a campaign to promote computing in Malayalam. The campaign took place from 21 February to 31 March 2008 in Trivandrum and included an awareness dimension as well as a capacity-building initiative. The campaign was carried out through the Akshaya telecentre network and schools and also included training programmes for the general public.

VIII. Languages, socialization and integration

92. The initiatives for the International Year of Languages listed in this chapter focus on the role of languages within major social transformations (such as international migration and increasing urbanization) and other critical social issues, such as exclusion, poverty and rights of minorities.

Activities of Member States

93. In the framework of Africa Week organized at UNESCO from 26 to 30 May 2008, the conference "Les langues africaines, facteur d'intégration" took place on 28 May under the auspices of the Permanent Delegation of Kenya to UNESCO and the Africa Group. This event featured the Senegalese linguist and historian Pathé Diagne and Ayo Bamgbose from the Department of Linguistics and African Languages of the University of Ibadan in Nigeria.

94. The International Conference on Everyday Multilingualism took place from 13 to 15 July 2008 in Vienna. It was organized by the National Commission for UNESCO of Austria, the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture, the Federal Ministry of Science and Research and the Government of Burgenland, and was aimed at identifying opportunities and good practices for multilingualism in relevant areas such as education, minorities, the economy and the media. Nearly 120 experts from 15 countries met to discuss the challenges and opportunities of multilingualism in everyday life.

95. On 20 February 2008, the National Commission for UNESCO of Zambia, in partnership with UNDP and the United Nations Information Centre organized in Lusaka a conference on "The role of language in development in Zambia".

96. On 18 November 2008, a national conference was organized in Wellington by the National Commission for UNESCO of New Zealand, in collaboration with the Maori Language Commission, the Human Rights Commission, the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, Victoria University, the Auckland branch of the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages association, Adult Community Education

Aotearoa, the Manukau Institute of Technology and the New Zealand Association of Language Teachers. Entitled "Diary of events", the conference focused on research and analysis to promote multilingualism.

97. The National Direction for Culture of Mozambique, in collaboration with the National Commission for UNESCO and various national and local partners, organized a series of events on improving language diversity, including a workshop at the Ministry of Education and Culture in Maputo on 21 February 2008 on the development of language policy planned by the Government.

Civil society activities

98. A second "Unity festival" was organized by Alcala de Henares Municipality in Madrid from 25 January to 6 August 2008. Its aim was to unite people, to bring immigrants, families and friends together to promote integration, friendship, solidarity and unity in their own languages, to attract the attention of the immigrant and wider public to African arts and culture through music, dance, spoken words and other art forms, to contribute to the spiritual and physical well-being of the people, to promote peace and understanding and to emphasize the importance of arts and culture within the spheres of politics, economics and social development.

99. Organized by Druid Films in collaboration with the television studio RT Vojvodina, Magic Box Multimedia and Studio Matrix, the project "Folk tales and legends from Vojvodina" in Vojvodina, Serbia, on 15 and 16 September 2008 selected minority institutions and representatives whose mission was to gather and preserve works of folk poetry by producing 10 different folk tales, one for each nationality, by 10 different directors of different ages, visions and working techniques.

IX. Languages, indigenous knowledge and know-how

100. The following projects under the International Year of Languages aim to empower local and indigenous peoples by advocating full recognition of their unique knowledge, know-how and practices, including their languages.

Activities of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations

101. The UNESCO office in Hanoi is undertaking, between March 2008 and the end of 2009, a project entitled "Local knowledge education project: intersectoral platform" which fosters the use of ethnic minority language through the development of vernacular language content and supplemental education resources, drawing upon the ethnic group's oral traditions and expressions and other expressions of their cultural heritage. The general objective of the project is to empower ethnic minority communities by increasing their access to and encouraging their active participation in sustainable social development.

Civil society activities

102. An inaugural international conference on "Indigenous language revitalization and teaching" which took place on 27 September 2008 in Hamilton, New Zealand examined issues of language revitalization and teaching by showcasing Indigenous

communities using the Te Ataarangi methodology. The keynote speakers were Bernard Spolsky (Israel), Naomi Losch (Hawaii) and Katerina Te Heikoko Mataira (New Zealand). The conference, which was organized by the Te Runanga o Te Ataarangi Association, provided a language revitalization symposium based on the development of digital media as tools for language learning.

103. The research, thesis writing, oral defence, bookbinding and publishing in book form of the project "Pagsasatubuanan: modernistang poetikang bikolnon", a literary essay written in the Bikol-Naga language about Bikolnon poetry from the Bicol region of the Philippines, was carried out from 2 June to 2 September 2008 by Jose Jason L. Chancoco, from Ateneo de Naga University (the Philippines), Department of Literature and Language Studies.

104. The Diplomado en Lingüística Descriptiva y Empatía Cultural was a 160-hour certificate course that took place from 7 July to 1 August 2008 in Mexico at the State University of San Luis Potosí in collaboration with the Summer Institute of Linguistics. Some 20 staff members and 61 students participated in the course with more than 15 distinct minority languages represented. The diploma was intended to offer introductory descriptive linguistic techniques and cultural appreciation to educators, students, bilingual school teachers and mother-tongue speakers of a minority language.

X. Conclusion and lessons

105. The important mobilization raised by the International Year of Languages with its restricted time frame and resources proves that languages and multilingualism are vital items on the international agenda, at both the governmental and the non-governmental level.

106. Civil society demonstrated unexpected vitality and responsiveness during the Year. In many cases, civil society was able to act more quickly than institutions and Governments, with innovative views that revealed new transdisciplinary areas of action.

107. The goals pursued by the different actors of the International Year of Languages were diverse and sometimes contradictory. For instance, the views on the role of vehicular languages in terms of language endangerment and social integration varied considerably. Accordingly, the shared interest for languages does not necessarily imply a shared vision.

108. It should be noted that accurate measurement of the sustainable effects of the International Year of Languages, notably for implementation of national language policies in all relevant domains (education, culture, media and administration, etc.), will require an in-depth assessment throughout 2009, 2010 and 2011. To this end, a series of monitoring tools should be created, based on consolidated methodologies. Fund-raising and research will be a key factor in this regard. The UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger of Disappearing is certainly a tool that will serve as a source of inspiration for the development of international monitoring instruments.